

Message Text

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11

ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ERDA-07 H-02 INR-07 IO-13 L-03

OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-02 PM-04 PRS-01 SAJ-01 SAM-01 SP-02

SS-15 TRSE-00 NSC-05 /089 W
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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4149

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

UNCLAS LONDON 11943

E. O. 11652:NA

TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR, FR

SUBJECT: OBSERVER ARTICLE ON FRENCH AND MBFR

1. THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE AUGUST 1
OBSERVER DATELINED WASHINGTON.

2. BEGIN TEXT: FRENCH BLOW TO 'CUT TROOPS' TALKS
FROM PAUL LEWIS IN WASHINGTON.
FRANCE HAS ENGINEERED A NEW SETBACK IN THE LONG-
STALLED VIENNA TALKS ON REDUCING NATO AND WARSAW
PACT FORCES IN EUROPE JUST WHEN THEY WERE STARTING
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TO MAKE PROGRESS.

ACCORDING TO SENIOR UNITED STATES OFFICIALS HERE, THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT LET IT BE KNOWN THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS ON 17 JUNE THAT ITS TROOPS STATIONED IN GERMANY SHOULD NO LONGER BE COUNTED IN THE TOTAL LEVEL WHICH NATO IS OFFERING TO CUT IN RETURN FOR WARSAW PACT REDUCTIONS.

THE FRENCH MOVE CAME ONLY FIVE DAYS AFTER THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE TALKS, HAD TABLED THE PRECISE SIZE OF THE FORCES THEY CLAIM TO HAVE IN THE AREA WHERE THE MUTUAL TROOP CUTS ARE PLANNED.

ALTHOUGH THESE FIGURES ARE ABOUT 12-13 PER CENT LOWER THAN NATO ESTIMATES, THEIR VERY PRESENTATION IS SEEN BY US ANALYSTS AS A SIGN THAT SOVIET UNION IS PREPARING TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE REVISED TROOP-CUT OFFER TABLED BY NATO LAST WINTER IN AN EFFORT TO INJECT SOME LIFE INTO THE NEGOTIATIONS.

BASED ON THE SO-CALLED 'OPTION THREE' FORMULA, THE NEW NATO OFFER INCLUDED A REDUCTION IN TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS STATIONED IN WESTERN EUROPE, IN RETURN FOR MOVES TOWARDS A COMMON FORCE CEILING THAT WOULD MEAN LARGER CUTS BY THE WARSAW PACT THAN IN NATO'S MUCH SMALLER ARMY.

NOW, BY SAYING THAT ITS FORCES IN GERMANY SHOULD NOT BE INCLUDED IN THE NATO TOTAL, FRANCE HAS GIVEN WESTERN NEGOTIATORS THE THANKLESS TASK OF TRYING TO PERSUADE THE WARSAW PACT COUNTRIES TO ACCEPT AN EVEN SMALLER NATO REDUCTION THAN HAD BEEN OFFERED.

UNITED STATES OFFICIALS SEE THE FRENCH MANOEUVRE AS A DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO FRUSTRATE A NEGOTIATION FRANCE HAS NEVER SUPPORTED OR PARTICIPATED IN, CLAIMING THAT IT WAS REALLY AN ATTEMPT TO DISGUISE A CUT IN US FORCES IN EUROPE. THEY ASSUME IT REFLECTED FEARS THAT RUSSIA MIGHT FINALLY BE SHOWING

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INTEREST IN A MUTUAL FORCE REDUCTION THAT INCLUDED NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

THE US IS NOW TRYING TO DISCOVER WHO IS BEHIND THE FRENCH INITIATIVE AND TO PERSUADE THE GOVERNMENT TO CHANGE ITS MIND. IN THE MEANTIME, OFFICIALS POINT OUT THAT WHILE IN LINE WITH HOSTILITY TOWARDS THE MUTUAL BALANCED FORCE REDUCTIONS EXERCISE, IT RUNS

COUNTER TO THE MORE CO-OPERATIVE ATTITUDE FRANCE
HAS BEEN SHOWING TOWARDS THE NATO ALLIANCE.
END TEXT.

ARMSTRONG

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